

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A system for prefetching travel information relevant to travel products from travel suppliers, prior to a process of making travel reservations by users, the system comprising:

a prefetcher for accessing the travel information;

a cache for storing the travel information accessed by said prefetcher; and

a front-end, wherein the system is able to receive queries from the user and respond to the queries,

such that said cache of the system caches the travel information, wherein said prefetching creates a comprehensive cache having a substantially high probability of containing the travel information that the user needs.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said front-end is embodied as a Web site.

3. The system according to claim 1, further comprising an optimizer to perform post-processing on the prefetched data.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein said system serves one or more organizations, and said users are members of said organizations.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein said users are travel agents that use said system to serve their customers.

6. A method for prefetching travel information relevant to travel products from travel suppliers, prior to a process of making travel reservations by users, wherein the travel information is stored in a cache, the method comprising:

determining the set of travel suppliers that need to be queried; and

performing the following for each travel supplier:

making a connection to that travel supplier;

determining what queries need to be sent to the supplier, based on the protocol that is defined by the specific supplier and the travel information that needs to be retrieved from the supplier;
performing the following for each query that is needed:
 sending the query to the supplier and retrieving the results;
 and
 storing the results in the cache; and
terminating said connection to the supplier.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the specific type of product is one of the following:

 rental cars;
 accommodations; and
 air travel.

8. The method according to claim 6, wherein said protocol is based on Web services, and wherein said queries are messages that are sent to the supplier, and wherein said results are messages sent by the supplier.

9. The method according to claim 6, wherein storing involves substantial processing before said storing.

10. The method according to claim 6, wherein said travel products are of special interest to at least one organization and said users are members of said at least one organization.

11. The method according to claim 6, wherein said users are travel agents that are making reservations for their customers.

12. The method according to claim 6, wherein said travel supplier is a Global Distribution System (GDS) that supplies information for travel products from different suppliers.

13. The method according to claim 6, wherein determining what queries need to be sent involves inspecting the history of travel reservations of said users.